

Study, December 2022

Democracy as an aspect of Security Policy – Perspectives from Europe and beyond

Comparative study on democracy as a foreign and security policy factor

Executive summary

The Russian full-fledged invasion of Ukraine, its serial commitment of war crimes in Ukraine and the worldwide economic and social disruptions that have followed the Russian war put the question of security of democracies into sharp focus. Many democratic governments are currently updating their existing security strategies (The Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and the UK) to reflect the changed threat landscape. Germany and Ireland are in the process of drafting a first security strategy, expected to be published in January. Six states released new or updated security strategies in the last two years.

The question is what lessons have been learned from the Russian war against Ukraine since 2014 for understanding the global threat scenario for democracies – in particular: Do governments in democracies recognise the threats that result from the way that political systems are set-up? Will the expansion of the Russian war against Ukraine in 2022 lead to change in security strategies?

International security threats from authoritarian governments are rooted in that particular form of government. Authoritarian governments are not accountable to their people, they are not constrained by domestic checks and balances, they may be engaged in wide-spread corruption with impunity and they can be prone to distract from domestic legitimacy crises by stirring up conflicts abroad.

Authoritarian governments are unpredictable. They can decide on policies in secrecy with only few people involved in decision-making and no free media scrutinizing policy. The Russian attack of 24 February is an extreme case: The Russian people had no idea that Putin would start a major war; most Russian soldiers did not even know they were going to war. Publics in other countries were better

informed than Russians, because the CIA issued specific, public warnings.

We have analysed the security strategies of 13 democracies to understand to which degree they reflect the security threat from authoritarian states.

These are our key take-aways:

- The security threat emerging from the inherent characteristics of authoritarian regimes is increasingly recognised but still not very articulate in many security strategies.
- There is a gap in the thinking about international security and the nature of political regimes: Democracies understand the defensive needs in terms of military protection, they also support democracy in many countries, but they have no overarching security concept that employs all means of policy in favour of democratic governance to reduce the global security risks from authoritarian rule.
- Democracy is often portrayed as a matter of values only, of idealism, taken care of through projects to be funded, rather than as a hard foreign policy issue that affects core interests of democracies.
- Security strategies tend to stress the threat that authoritarian states pose to their domestic politics (through disinformation campaigns, corruption of domestic actors, sabotage, etc.), they elaborate less on the threat that such governments pose for

international security. Even if Russia had not engaged in attacks against institutions in many democracies, its war against Ukraine would still pose a huge security risk to them (people forced to flee to democracies, trade disruptions, energy shortages, humanitarian needs, blatant violation of international rules, etc.).

→ The strategies of the US, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are particularly vocal in naming autocracy as a key challenge. The strategies of Denmark and the Netherlands refer to challenges to the EU when EU member states become authoritarian. The Danish strategy is particularly vocal on this point and mentions Hungary. The Foreign Ministries of 13 democracies have departments or units dealing specifically with democracy and human rights.

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	6
Country Overviews	7
- CANADA	9
- CZECH REPUBLIC	12
- DENMARK.....	14
- FINLAND.....	17
- FRANCE.....	21
- IRELAND	23
- NETHERLANDS.....	25
- NORWAY.....	28
- SLOVAKIA	30
- SWEDEN	33
- UNITED KINGDOM	37
- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	40
About Democracy Reporting International	43

Introduction

The trend of global autocratisation since 2012¹ is a challenge for security, especially because some autocratic regimes interfere with democratic processes elsewhere. But the threat goes beyond that: While political science has long shown that democracies almost never go to war with each other, autocratic regimes are more likely to wage war or increase regional or global tensions in other ways. The Russian war against Ukraine has put these risks in broad daylight.

How are democracies dealing with this threat in the formulation of their foreign policies and in particular in their security strategies?

In this study we look at 13 democratic states and their approach to democracy/autocracy abroad. How do they articulate the security dimensions of internal governance? We primarily look at security strategies but also at other policy documents related to democracy abroad. We also assess to which degree these democracies anchor the concern for democracy in their institutional architecture.

They establish “a national understanding of the threats and risks of the security environment, and the values and principles that will guide the state in providing state and human security”.² Authoritarian regimes or autocracies are referred to according to the 2021 analysis of the

¹ Andrea Cassani, Luca Tomini, “Reversing regimes and concepts: from democratization to autocratization”, 2018.

² Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, [National Security Policies. Formulating national security policies for good security sector governance](#), 17 November 2015

Economist's Intelligence Unit Democracy Index;³ among them, the study will focus on those identified in national strategies as a source of risks for democracy and the rule of law.

Country Overviews

- BELGIUM

Main policy documents	Year
National Security Strategy	2021
General political note in international solidarity	2021

Belgium's integrated security National Security Strategy (NSS) was approved in December 2021 by the National Security Council.⁴ The NSS refers to democracy, human rights and the rule of law as crucial elements for the country's security. It includes a broad assessment of potential internal and external factors that may constitute risks and threats, as well as a list of six vital interests, among which features safeguarding the democratic state and its values. While stating that "authoritarian regimes openly attack the principles of our democracies", the strategy does not specifically refer to autocracies as a source of major concern for national security. It does however refer to democracy and rule of law as pivotal elements of the Belgian foreign policy. In line with this approach, the federal government's

³ The Economist Intelligence Unit, [Democracy Index 2021: the China challenge](#), 10 February 2022

⁴ Kingdom of Belgium, Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, [A strategy to make Belgium more resilient](#), 4 February 2022

“general political note”⁵ on international solidarity regarding the year 2022 placed democracy and human rights at the centre of international cooperation activities in bi-lateral relations as well as multilateral formats.

Institutional responsibilities

Within the federal government, the National Security Council (composed of the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers) ⁶ determines the main guidelines, coordinates all issues linked to intelligence and security policy and sets the priorities of the intelligence and security services. In the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, the Directorate for Human Rights (M3) of the Directorate General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation (DGM)⁷ ensures the inclusion of the democracy and human rights dimensions in Belgian foreign policy. In the same Directorate General, the tasks linked to international security, including management, advocacy, development and coordination for hybrid threats are under the responsibility of the Directorate for Security Policy (M1). In addition, in the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD)⁸ a high-level

⁵ Chambre des représentants de Belgique, [NOTE DE POLITIQUE GÉNÉRALE. Solidarité internationale](#), 29 October 2021

⁶ Website of the [Directorate-General for Secretariats and Coordination](#) of Belgium

⁷ Website of the Directorate General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation (DGM) of Belgium, [Services and structure](#)

⁸ Website of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) of Belgium, [Services and structure](#)

diplomat follows international cooperation issues linked to democracy, including those related with international security. As concerns the parliament,⁹ the Security and Foreign Affairs Committees of the lower chamber consider all issues linked to the international cooperation and security strategy.¹⁰

- CANADA

Main policy documents	Year
Feminist International Assistance Policy	2017
National Security Policy “Securing an Open Society”	2004

Support to democracy and democratic institutions is central to Canada’s strategic foreign policy: the commitment to democracy and human rights is a core strategic priority in the Global Affairs Canada’s Departmental Plan 2022.¹¹ Global Affairs Canada unites the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development and International Development. The Plan sets out an integrated approach combining diplomacy, support programmes and advocacy to advance democracy across its international assistance and foreign policy activities. This is also

⁹ [Website of the Belgian Parliament](#)

¹⁰ Website of the Belgian Parliament, [Permanent Committees](#)

¹¹ Global Affairs Canada, [Departmental Plan](#)

reflected in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (2017)¹², particularly in its action area on inclusive governance.

Canada's National Security Policy "Securing an Open Society"¹³ is outdated (from 2014). It articulated core national security interests based on the values of democracy, human rights, respect for the rule of law, and pluralism. While the strategy has not been updated, new concerns have been articulated, for example reports by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) explored the issue of the "interference in national democratic processes as a security threat".¹⁴

Several civil society organisations, universities and think tanks raised concerns regarding the preparedness of Canada and its capacity to respond to the challenges that characterise the current scenario. One of the main publications drafted for feeding the debate, "A national security strategy for the 2020s",¹⁵ features as co-author Vincent Rigby, the former national security adviser to President Trudeau. This and other documents¹⁶ analyse the challenges to democracy, the rule of law, multilateralism and human rights deriving from authoritarian

¹² Global Affairs Canada, [Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy](#)

¹³ Government of Canada, [Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy](#), April 2004

¹⁴ Canada's Security Intelligence Service, [Foreign Interference. Threats to Canada's Democratic Process](#), July 2021

¹⁵ Task Force on National Security, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
[A National Security Strategy for the 2020s](#), May 2022

¹⁶ Aaron Shull and Wesley Wark, Centre for International Governance Innovation, [Reimagining a Canadian National Security Strategy](#)

governments. Their publication triggered a debate with national authorities¹⁷ and the context might prove fertile for developments at the policy-making level.

Institutional responsibilities

Differently from other countries analysed here, Canada's national security architecture does not include a Cabinet-level body, as the Prime Minister relies on a National Security and Intelligence Advisor. Within the Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs' mandate includes the promotion of peace and security, combating authoritarianism and countering foreign interference.¹⁸ The Minister of Foreign Affairs shares with the Ministers of (1) International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and (2) Economic Development and International Development the leadership on Global Affairs Canada (GAC); this institution is in charge of international relations, including advancing democracy across all fields of foreign policy.¹⁹ Within GAC, this task falls within the competence of the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion, under the leadership of the Associate Deputy Minister for International Security.²⁰ A Canadian centre to promote peace, human rights, democracy and inclusive governance worldwide

¹⁷ Centre for International Governance Innovation, [Canada's National Security: A Discussion with The Honourable Marco Mendicino](#), 27 June 2022

¹⁸ Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mandate Letter](#), 16 December 2021

¹⁹ Global Affairs Canada, [Ministry organization](#)

²⁰ Website of the Government of Canada, [Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion](#)

is currently being set up²¹ by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Development.²² Within the parliament, the Senate’s Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs has the mandate to examine legislation and study issues related to national security, defence and veterans affairs.²³ The Committee is currently working on a report concerning national defence and security, expected by June 2023.²⁴

- CZECH REPUBLIC

Main policy documents	Year
Security strategy of the Czech Republic	2015
Human rights and transition promotion policy concept	2015

The 2015 Czech Republic’s security strategy²⁵ sets out a list of national security priorities, ranked as vital, strategic or ‘other’, according to their relevance for the country. The safeguarding of the “democratic rule of law, including the guaranteeing and protection of the

²¹ Government of Canada, [Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada appearance before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development \(FAAE\) on mandate letter](#), 3 March 2022

²² Canada House of Commons, [Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Session Minutes](#), 3 March 2022

²³ Senate of Canada, [Introduction To The Standing Senate Committee On National Security, Defence And Veterans Affairs](#)

²⁴ Senate of Canada, [The Standing Senate Committee On National Security And Defence, Order Of Reference](#), 10 February 2022

²⁵ Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, [Security Strategy of the Czech Republic 2015](#)

fundamental human rights and freedoms of the population” is categorised as a vital interest. The document refers to non-democratic regimes when specifying that, for the Czech Republic, “the main sources of threat include hard-line attitudes set against the fundamental values of our society, threatening the concept of the democratic rule of law and denying the fundamental human rights and freedoms. The carriers of these attitudes are states as well as non-state actors, various groups and their sympathisers.” In its foreign policy, the Czech Republic promotes its values and interests through sharing its experience of democratic transition, as detailed in the policy concept note on “Human rights and transition promotion policy”²⁶ (2015). The document is a reference in the field of the country’s international cooperation and development policy.²⁷

Institutional responsibilities

The National Security Council²⁸ is the entity responsible for the institutional coordination across different departments for the planning, drafting and implementation of the measures concerning foreign and national security policy. The activities of the Council’s committees are coordinated, respectively, by the Security Policy Department²⁹ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Ministry for

²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, [Human rights and transition promotion policy concept of the Czech Republic](#), September 2015

²⁷ Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, [Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid](#)

²⁸ Website of the Government of the Czech Republic, [National Security Council](#)

²⁹ Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Department of Security Policy, [Organisational Structure](#)

Defence, mainly through its Defence Policy and Strategy Division³⁰. The Department of Human Rights and Transition Promotion Policy³¹ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of coordinating the Czech foreign policy in the fields of human rights and international support to democracy. Also, the parliament monitors the government through its Committee for Defence of the Chamber of Deputies³² and Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate.³³

- DENMARK

Main policy documents	Year
Foreign and Security Policy Strategy	2022
Danish Security and Defence towards 2035	2022

Denmark's Foreign and Security Policy Strategy³⁴, released in January 2022, considers democracy, justice and human rights as pivotal elements. The document dedicates high attention to democracy support worldwide, as "countries such as China and Russia and other authoritarian regimes attempt to hollow out the values our institutions

³⁰ Website of the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, [Defence Policy and Strategy Division](#)

³¹ Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Department of Human Rights and Transformation Policy, [Organisational Structure](#)

³² Website of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic, [Committee on Defence](#)

³³ Website of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, [Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security](#)

³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, [Foreign and Security Policy Strategy](#), January 2022

are built on". Russia's attack on and invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to significant changes: Denmark ended its opt out rule from the EU's cooperation on security and defence,³⁵ on the basis of a national referendum.³⁶ The Danish Minister of Defence wrote in the "Danish Foreign Policy Review 2022": "we are faced with rising authoritarian and anti-democratic great powers deliberately challenging the international rules-based order."³⁷

The Act for International Cooperation (2017)³⁸ already sets out as main objectives the support to human rights and democracy, while the strategy for international cooperation, "The world we share"³⁹ (2021) specifically focuses on support to democracy: this priority is addressed from various angles, including the support to civil society and marginalised groups, as well as the strengthening of national institutions and democratic processes, in a world where "rights and democracy are under increasing threat from authoritarian forces". In terms of programmes, the country's commitment⁴⁰ to democracy, human rights and good governance is mainly channelled through

³⁵ Website of the Danish Ministry of Defence, [Denmark and the EU](#)

³⁶ European External Action Service, [Denmark: Statement by the High Representative on the outcome of the referendum on the opt-out in defence matters](#), 1 June 2022

³⁷ Danish Institute for International Studies, [Danish Foreign Policy Review 2022 has been published](#), 20 June 2022

³⁸ Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation, [Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Denmark 2021](#)

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, [The World We Share. Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation](#), 2021

⁴⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, [The Government's Priorities For Danish Development Cooperation 2022](#)

support to civil society organisations,⁴¹ as well as via the initiative “Tech for democracy”,⁴² aiming to develop, promote, use and regulate technology to the benefit of democracy and human rights.

It should be noted that, in September 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published “Danish Security and Defence towards 2035”,⁴³ a new report that expands the country’s vision with regards to international threats, focussing on threats deriving from instability risks for the European security. The report addresses risks emerging from within democratic countries, an area that most strategies do not address. On the US it notes: “A new administration led by a re-elected Trump or a president with a similar political programme would challenge the transatlantic relationship”, noting that that the USA would support populist forces that undermine the rule of law and democracy in European countries.” The report also notes security threats from within the EU, which others do not do: “The strengthened unity in the EU and the dynamic development of the EU’s strategic autonomy and role as a security policy actor are threatened by populist forces that are challenging fundamental EU principles regarding the rule of law and democracy and which want to roll back the EU. As long as they only have power in countries like Hungary, the problem is manageable; but should they win power in one of the major countries, there is a serious risk of the cohesion and dynamism of the Union being undermined.”

⁴¹ Through initiatives such as the [“New Democracy Fund”](#)

⁴² Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, [Tech for Democracy](#)

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, The security policy analysis group, [Danish Security and Defence towards 2035](#), September 2022

With regard to cybersecurity the report highlights that “Denmark is working together with other countries to expand the options for countermeasures over a wider spectrum, especially in areas where hostile external interference and manipulation threaten EU values, democracy, and prosperity.” and raises concerns about the negative effects of populism on “EU’s strategic autonomy and role as a security policy actor”.

Institutional responsibilities

The Prime Minister chairs the government’s security committee.⁴⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴⁵ oversees all issues linked to foreign, development and security policy. International cooperation activities are managed by DANIDA⁴⁶, which forms an integral part of the Ministry and falls under the authority of the State Secretary for Development. The security strategy is under the responsibility of the State Secretary for Foreign Policy, within the Security Policy Department. The parliament’s Foreign Policy Committee⁴⁷ deals with a range of security and defence policy issues and works closely with the Foreign Affairs⁴⁸ and Defence Committees.⁴⁹

- FINLAND

⁴⁴ Sune J. Andersen, Martin Ejnar Hansen & Philip H. J. Davies, [Oversight and governance of the Danish intelligence community](#), 4 January 2022

⁴⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, [Organisation chart](#)

⁴⁶ Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, [Danida](#)

⁴⁷ Website of the Danish Parliament, [The Foreign Policy Committee](#)

⁴⁸ Website of the Danish Parliament, [The Foreign Affairs Committee](#)

⁴⁹ Website of the Danish Parliament, [The Defence Committee](#)

Main policy documents	Year
Government Report on changes in the security environment	2022
Government Report on Human Rights Policy	2022
Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy	2020
Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Democracy Support Policy	2014

The Finnish government did not adopt a security strategy but in 2020 published a Report on Foreign Security Policy of 2020.⁵⁰ The document notes: "The key elements of the set of values Finland applies in its foreign and security policy include the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, democracy, peace, freedom, equitable treatment and equality in all its international activities." The Finnish report uses a wide definition of security and links interests with global developments:

By means of its foreign and security policy, Finland produces security, addresses global challenges and acts for a safer and fairer world, viewing security from a wide perspective. Finland participates in international cooperation with an aim to secure peace and human rights and to promote societal development, the ultimate goal being a more stable, predictable and safer world." The report notes: "The respect for and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law provide the value-based foundations for the actions Finland takes in its foreign and security policy. Finland promotes human rights as an EU Member, bilaterally and in multilateral fora."

⁵⁰ The Finnish Government, [Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy](#), 2020

The report mentions specific threats from authoritarian regimes, but this aspect is not elaborated on.

However, in April 2022, the government published a new report on changes in the security environment that complements the 2020 Report.⁵¹ It recognises the widening of a value-based polarisation between countries in the multilateral and regional cooperation forums and refers to the Russian war against Ukraine as “an assault against democracy”. Finland applied to join NATO in May 2022.

Finland’s international development, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction policy applies such principles by emphasizing actions in support of democratic societies.⁵² With the purpose of promoting a coherent approach to these issues, the Ministry published a “Democracy support policy” (2014), framed around three working priorities: increase political participation of marginalised groups, support civil society organisations and strengthen democratic institutions.⁵³ The aforementioned values are also at the core of the Finnish government’s Report on Human Rights Policy (February 2022) that provides for long-term guidance concerning fundamental and human rights activities: it underlines their central role as cross-cutting issues for Finland’s foreign policy, as well as within national

⁵¹ The Finnish Government, [Report on changes in the security environment](#)

⁵² Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, [Peaceful and democratic societies](#)

⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, [Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Democracy support policy](#), 2014

governance, especially in a context of “new rise of authoritarianism” and a “pace of de-democratisation”.⁵⁴

Institutional responsibilities

The government’s Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy provides for guidance on foreign, security and defence policy (The Security Committee assists the government and the ministries in all matters pertaining to comprehensive security)⁵⁵. The Political Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs hosts both the Unit for Security Policy, which has the responsibility for general security policy, and the Unit for Human Rights Policy, in charge of democracy-related issues.⁵⁶ Within the latter office, an *ad hoc* Ambassador promotes Finnish foreign policy on human rights and democracy and ensures horizontal coordination across the Ministry’s offices for related matters.⁵⁷ The parliament is involved in the definition and approval of the government’s security and defence reports.⁵⁸ Civil society is also systematically involved both in the design and implementation of the security strategy. According to the Finnish approach, this means to

⁵⁴ Government of Finland, [Report on Human Rights Policy](#), 2022

⁵⁵ Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, [OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects on Security on Finland](#), 14 April 2022

⁵⁶ Website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, [Political Department](#)

⁵⁷ Website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, [Unit for Human Rights Policy](#)

⁵⁸ Parliament of Finland, Foreign Affairs Committee, [Report on the Government Report on Changes in the Security Environment and the Government Report on Finland’s Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#), 17 May 2022

“defend and promote the values of democracy on every level of society, from daily life to politics and national defence”.

- FRANCE

Main policy documents	Year
Strategic update	2021
Human Rights and development: A Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation	2019
Strategic Defence and National Security Review Revue	2017
White paper on defence and national security	2013

The Strategic Defence and National Security Review was approved by the National Security and Defence Council in 2017.⁵⁹ The document largely operates with a framework of military security. It does not identify autocracies as a direct risk for the French democracy, though it mentions aggressive acts by the Chinese and Russian governments.

The Strategic Update of 2021, published by the Ministry of Armed Forces, mentions an attitude of strategic intimidation by Russia and China.⁶⁰ There may be a current trend in favour of revising this approach - and consequent update of the national strategy⁶¹- in some

⁵⁹ Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, [Revue Stratégique De Défense Et De Sécurité Nationale 2017](#)

⁶⁰ Ministry of the Armed Forces of France, [Strategic Update 2021](#)

⁶¹ Michel Duclos, Institut Montaigne, [Guerre en Ukraine : nouvelle politique étrangère pour la France](#), June 2022

cases, evoking the threats posed by "62".⁶³ This is for instance the case of some publications of the Ministry of the Armed Forces.

In terms of co-operation, the French government has increased funding over the last years.⁶⁴ The national strategy of 2019, indicates that France applies a human rights-based approach in its international cooperation policy.⁶⁵ In addition, the Strategy on prevention, resilience and sustainable peace for the period 2018-2022 mentions inclusive governance as a field of support to third countries.⁶⁶

Institutional responsibilities

The national security strategy is implemented under the authority of the Prime Minister.⁶⁷ Within the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Mission for democratic governance of the Directorate for Sustainable Development (DDD) leads the development of democratic governance strategies, particularly with regards to the reform of the state, the strengthening of national and regional institutions, the

⁶² Institut Montaigne, [Repenser la défense face aux crises du 21e siècle](#)

⁶³ George David, Revue Defense Nationale, [Le mythe de l'autonomie stratégique : une perspective de l'extérieur sur la capacité des puissances d'agir seules](#)

⁶⁴ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, [OECD Stat 2021](#)

⁶⁵ Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, [Human Rights and development. A Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation](#), 2019

⁶⁶ Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, [Rapport De Stratégie Prévention, Résilience Et Paix Durable \(2018-2022\). Approche globale de réponse à la fragilization des États et des sociétés](#), 2018

⁶⁷ Defence Code of the Republic of France, [Article L1131-1](#)

promotion of human rights, the rule of law and public freedoms.⁶⁸ In the same Ministry the main player in the field of security is the Directorate of Cooperation on Security and Defence (DCSD).⁶⁹ The role of the Parliament is mainly limited to political and budgetary implications of the national security strategy, in addition to its legislative functions in the fields of defence and security.⁷⁰

- IRELAND

Main policy documents	Year
A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development	2019

Ireland's military neutrality seems to be challenged by the increasing deterioration of the European security environment.⁷¹ According to a recent report of the Commission on the Defence Forces (2022),⁷² Ireland is unable to "conduct a meaningful defence"⁷³ of the national territory. In order to fill the country's security gaps, the government is

⁶⁸ Official Legal Journal of the Republic of France, [Décision du 20 septembre 2022 portant délégation de signature \(direction générale de la mondialisation, de la culture, de l'enseignement et du développement international\)](#)

⁶⁹ Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, [Organisational Chart](#)

⁷⁰ Website of the National Assembly of France, [Commission de la défense nationale et des forces armées](#)

⁷¹ Website of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, [Ireland's policy of neutrality](#)

⁷² Website of the Government of Ireland, [Commission on the Defence Forces](#)

⁷³ Government of Ireland, [Report Of The Commission On The Defence Forces](#), February 2022

working on the development of a National Security Strategy,⁷⁴ under the responsibility of a newly created National Security Analysis Centre⁷⁵ in the Department of the Taoiseach (the Prime Minister). The policy documents previously released in the field of national security are the White Paper on Defence Update of 2019⁷⁶ and the White Paper on Defence 2015,⁷⁷ which do not elaborate on the challenge of autocracies to security. When it comes to the policy framework for international cooperation, “A Better World: Ireland’s Policy for International Development” includes as objectives the development of effective and accountable institutions, underpinned by strong governance and adherence to the rule of law.⁷⁸

Institutional responsibilities

The National Security Committee is chaired by the Secretary General to the Government.⁷⁹ The National Security Analysis Centre in the Taoiseach’s Department⁸⁰ provides a secretariat to the National

⁷⁴ As mentioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland in a [written answer to a Member of the Parliament](#), in May 2022, as well as in more [recent exchanges](#)

⁷⁵ Department of Defence of Ireland, [Ministerial Brief](#), June 2020

⁷⁶ Government of Ireland, [White Paper On Defence Update 2019](#)

⁷⁷ Website of the Government of Ireland, [White Paper on Defence 2015](#), 26 August 2015

⁷⁸ Government of Ireland, [A better world. Ireland’s Policy for International Development](#)

⁷⁹ Website of the Government of Ireland, [White Paper on Defence 2015](#), 26 August 2015

⁸⁰ Government of Ireland, [Department of the Taoiseach Organisation Chart](#), 25 July 2022

Security Committee and co-ordinated strategic advice to the government on threats to Ireland’s national security⁸¹. The management of the Irish support to governance within the Department of Foreign Affairs is a responsibility of the Policy Unit of the Development Co-operation and Africa Division.⁸² The Political Division is in charge of the international security policy. Finally, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence is the parliament’s reference body for all issues in this field.⁸³

- NETHERLANDS

Main policy documents	Year
Working Worldwide for the Security of the Netherlands: An Integrated International Security Strategy 2018-2022 (<i>currently under revision</i>)	2018

The reference document for national security of the Netherlands, the Integrated International Security Strategy 2018-2022 (*Rijksbrede Veiligheids strategie - RbVs*)⁸⁴, is currently being revised. The updated strategy is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Department of Defence of Ireland, [Ministerial Brief](#), June 2020

⁸² Website of the Department of Foreign Affairs, [Who does what, Division: Development Cooperation and Africa Division](#)

⁸³ Website of the House of Oireachtas, [Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence](#)

⁸⁴ Not available online.

⁸⁵ The indicative timetable appears in the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, [A Stronger Netherlands, A Safer Europe. Investing In A Robust Nato And EU Defence. 2022 Defence White Paper](#), July 2022

characterised by a clash of values between democratic and autocratic systems. The fact that “existing political parties and governments in some Eastern European countries are increasingly advocating more autocratic, illiberal versions of democracy” is “relevant for Dutch and European strategic thinking”, although at present it⁸⁶ was submitted by the government to parliament on 23 September 2022 and will serve as an input for the updated Security Strategy⁸⁷ It warns against the serious threat of hybrid attacks, mainly coming from Russia and explains that “this foreign influence is undesirable for national security, because it can gradually undermine the Dutch democratic constitutional state”.

When it comes to other fields of foreign affairs, in a newly published policy document concerning its trade and cooperation policies,⁸⁸ the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlines its interest in promoting the Netherlands and Europe as the “democratic alternative” to China and Russia. Such an interest materialises as initiatives for the strengthening of civil society organisations and the development of civic space, and as support to democratisation in fragile contexts.

⁸⁶ Website of the Government of the Netherlands, [Rijksbrede Risicoanalyse Nationale Veiligheid 2022](#), 31 July 2022

⁸⁷ Website of the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands, [National Security Strategy](#)

⁸⁸ Website of the Government of the Netherlands, [Policy Document for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation: Do what we do best](#), 10 October 2022

Institutional responsibilities

The reference body for matters of national and international security is the Ministerial Security Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister. The National Security Strategy falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Justice and Security.⁸⁹ At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁹⁰ coordinates the strategy's implementation,⁹¹ particularly through the Security and Defence Policy Division (DVB/VD) of the Security Policy Department (DVB), within the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGPZ). The Human Rights and Political and Legal Affairs Division (DMM/MP) of the Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department (DMM)⁹² develops foreign human rights policy, including as concerns the protection of democracy abroad. In addition, in the field of post-conflict reconstruction, the Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) is responsible for issues of democratic governance; and the Civil Society Division of the Social Development Department (DSO) is involved through supporting the development of diverse and pluralist societies. The government's

⁸⁹ Ernst Hirsch Ballin, Huub Dijstelbloem & Peter de Goede, [The Netherlands and the Extended Concept of Security: The Rise of Security Strategies](#), 8 April 2020

⁹⁰ Website of the Government of the Netherlands, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Organisational Structure](#)

⁹¹ As detailed in the Integrated International Security Strategy 2018-2022, "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will play a coordinating role, taking account of evolving global trends and threats and associated changes to strategic goals."

⁹² Website of the Government of the Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Organisational Structure, [Multilateral Departments](#)

policies and decisions regarding foreign policy and security are subject to parliamentary supervision.⁹³

- NORWAY

Main policy documents	Year
White Paper “Setting the Course for Norwegian foreign and security policy”	2017
International strategy for the freedom of expression	2021
Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway’s Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation	2014

In its White Paper “Setting the Course for Norwegian foreign and security policy”⁹⁴ from 2017, the definition of the national security interest includes sovereignty, territorial integrity and the democratic system of government. The safeguarding of democratic institutions, citizens’ rights and freedoms is a key objective of Norway’s foreign and security policy.⁹⁵ The loss of democracies’ influence worldwide is considered as a threat to Norway’s “values and positions in international negotiations and may affect political developments. In the worst case, this could undermine democracy and stability in our

⁹³ The information available on the websites of the [House of Representatives](#) and the [Senate](#) is very limited

⁹⁴ Website of the Government of Norway, [Meld. St. 36 \(2016–2017\). Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy](#)

⁹⁵ Peace and security feature as the most important global public goods in the context of Norway’s development policy: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Meld. St. 24 \(2016–2017\) Report to the Storting \(white paper\). The Sustainable Development Goals and Norway’s Development Policy. English summary](#)

own country”.⁹⁶ The promotion of democracy in Norwegian foreign and development policy is further detailed in the White Paper “Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway’s Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation”⁹⁷. The document focuses on the support of public participation and the rule of law; in addition, the “International strategy for freedom of expression” emphasizes the role of healthy democracies in safeguarding human rights.⁹⁸

The recent changes in the security environment led Norway to increase its security efforts⁹⁹: as mentioned by Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, “democracy, freedom and international law must also be defended through action. Norway stands firmly together with its European partners and allies in responding to Russia’s aggression”.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Meld. St. 36 \(2016–2017\) Report to the Storting \(white paper\), Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy](#)

⁹⁷ Government of Norway, [Meld. St. 10 \(2014–2015\) Report to the Storting \(white paper\). Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway’s Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation](#)

⁹⁸ Government of Norway, [International strategy for freedom of expression](#), 29 June 2021

⁹⁹ The Government of Norway, [Security in a new security policy landscape](#), 1 April 2022;

The Government of Norway, [Nordic countries to further strengthen cooperation on security and defence, Press release](#), 15 August 2022;

Le Figaro, [La Norvège relève son niveau d'alerte militaire](#), 31 October 2022 .

¹⁰⁰ Government of Norway, [Foreign policy address to the Storting 2022, Speech/statement](#), 22 March 2022

Institutional responsibilities

The government's Security Committee (RSU)¹⁰¹ is the highest body for security issues in Norway. Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main player is the Section for Human Rights, Democracy and Gender Equality¹⁰² of the Department for Multilateral Affairs, tasked with the horizontal responsibility of the promotion human rights and democracy internationally. The Department for Security Policy and the High North¹⁰³ follows global security issues and international cooperation activities in this field. The Parliamentary Standing Committee for Defence and Foreign Affairs¹⁰⁴ ensures political and democratic control in all fields of foreign policy, while the Intelligence Oversight Committee¹⁰⁵ considers security and defence issues.

- SLOVAKIA

Main policy documents	Year
Security strategy of the Slovak Republic	2021
Medium-term strategy for development cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2019 - 2023	2019

¹⁰¹ Website of the Government of Norway, [The Security Committee](#)

(Norwegian)

¹⁰² Website of the Government of Norway, [Department for Multilateral Affairs](#)

¹⁰³ Website of the Government of Norway, [Department for Security Policy and the High North](#)

¹⁰⁴ Website of the Storting, [The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence](#)

¹⁰⁵ Website of the Norwegian Parliamentary oversight committee on Intelligence and Security Services, [Annual Report 2021](#), 30 March 2022

Concept Paper on the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in the World	2021
---	------

The main policy tool of reference in this context is the Security strategy of the Slovak Republic,¹⁰⁶ adopted at the beginning 2021 by the Parliament. The promotion and protection of democratic values, fundamental human rights and freedoms and the rule of law feature as the key international interests of Slovakia. In the identification of security challenges and priorities, the strategy adopts a double approach: on the one hand, the chapter concerning security environment and threats mentions the “growing influence of authoritarian states promoting non-democratic regimes [...] who have the intent, capability and opportunity to seriously jeopardize the interests of states”; on the other, the strategy also refers to Slovakia’s interests in developing “good relations” with Russia.

As a complement to the abovementioned policy documents, Slovakia’s Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) in May 2021 released a Concept Paper that systematically integrates the promotion of human rights and democracy into its action and programmes.¹⁰⁷ This crosscutting approach also appears (1) in the medium-term s¹⁰⁸ (2) and

¹⁰⁶ The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, [Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic 2021](#)

¹⁰⁷ The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, [Concept Paper on the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in the World](#)

¹⁰⁸ The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, [Medium-Term Strategy For Development Cooperation Of The Slovak Republic For 2019 - 2023](#)

main recommendations of the recently published Strategic Foresight for the Foreign and European Policy of the Slovak Republic¹⁰⁹ which refers to the decline of democracy as a driver of change in the policy scenario up to 2035.

Institutional responsibilities

The government is assisted by the Security Council, composed of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Ministers of Defence, the Interior, Finance and Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, for all matters concerning foreign security and defence¹¹⁰. At the administrative level, the responsibility in this field is ascribed to the MFEA¹¹¹, in charge of coordinating the relevant activities of all national institutions. The Department of Human Rights, in the Directorate-General for International Organisations and Human Rights, plays a central role in the field of the promotion of democratic values.¹¹² The Common Foreign and Security Policy Department and Transatlantic Relations and Security Policy Department of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs are both active in the field of national security. The

¹⁰⁹ Website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, [Strategic Foresight for the Foreign and European Policy of the Slovak Republic](#), 10 November 2022

¹¹⁰ Other members can be appointed and dismissed by the chairman: [Art 8, Constitutional Act No. 227/2002 Coll. on State Security at the Time of War, State of War, State of Emergency, and State of Crisis](#)

¹¹¹ Website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, [What we do](#)

¹¹² Website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, [Organisation Chart](#)

Parliament (National Council) oversees the government's activities through its Foreign Affairs and Defence and Security Committees.¹¹³

- SWEDEN

Main policy documents	Year
Statement of government policy announcing a review of the national strategy	2022
Report of the Swedish government on the "Deterioration of the security environment – implications for Sweden"	2022
Total Defence 2021-2025	2020
Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law 2018–2022	2018
Statement of government policy	2019

Sweden's national security document "Total Defence 2021-2025",¹¹⁴ adopted in 2020, defines war and armed attacks as threats, but also names information warfare and threats against human rights and democracy¹¹⁵. In its 2020 report, the Swedish Security Service¹¹⁶, dedicated a chapter to "extensive attacks on democracy", detailing that "several countries are involved in security-threatening activities targeting Sweden. The most substantial threat is posed by

¹¹³ Website of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, [Committees of the NR SR](#)

¹¹⁴ The Government of Sweden, [Main elements of the Government bill Totalförsvaret 2021–2025/Total defence 2021–2025](#)

¹¹⁵ Mikael Wigell, Mariette Hägglund, Christian Fjäder, Emma Hakala, Johanna Ketola & Harri Mikkola, [FIIA Report: Nordic Resilience Strengthening Cooperation On Security Of Supply And Crisis Preparedness](#), September 2022

¹¹⁶ The Swedish Security Service, [The Swedish Security Service 2020](#)

authoritarian regimes that can devote significant resources to achieve their set security policy goals”.

In the framework of its foreign affairs, Sweden contributes to the defence of democratic rule through its 2016 Policy framework for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, characterised by a strong focus on the support to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.¹¹⁷ As a complement, the Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law 2018–2022 refers to the need to strengthen democratic systems world-wide in order to counter “authoritarian social models and political ideas”.¹¹⁸ The support to secure, just and inclusive democratic societies ranks highly on the Swedish development policy agenda, as the country devotes a significant share of its aid budget to democracy-related activities.¹¹⁹ It should also be noted that in its 2019 Statement of Foreign Policy Sweden launched a “Drive for Democracy”, in an effort to provide a counter-narrative to

¹¹⁷ The Government of Sweden, [Government Communication 2016/17:60: Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance](#), 14 December 2016

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, [Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law 2018–2022](#)

¹¹⁹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, [OECD Stat 2021](#)

those connected to the democratic backsliding that many countries are experiencing worldwide.¹²⁰

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 a government report (August 2022)¹²¹ concerning the changes in the international security environment refers to Russia as a threat, underlying the conflict "between an authoritarian regime and the free, open and democratic world". In May 2022 Sweden applied to join NATO.

In the field of development policy, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law is conceived as a key driver for development and is supported horizontally through a rights-based approach.¹²²

In this new framework, the newly appointed government issued a programmatic statement (October 2022)¹²³ prioritising a revision of the national foreign and security policy according to the threats that Sweden and Europe are currently facing. In a scenario in which "Russia is challenging the free world with its authoritarian domestic policy and

¹²⁰ The Government of Sweden, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, [Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, Wednesday 13 February 2019](#)

¹²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, [Deterioration of the security environment – implications for Sweden](#)

¹²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, [Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law 2018–2022](#)

¹²³ The Government of Sweden, [Statement of Government Policy](#), 18 October 2022

aggressive foreign policy”, changes to the national strategy are to be expected.

Institutional responsibilities

A revision to the Swedish government’s decision-making architecture concerning national foreign, security and defence policy has been announced in the recent programmatic statement.¹²⁴ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs’ responsibility in the field of foreign policy includes security matters.¹²⁵ In this framework, respectively, the Department for European Security Policy (UD ES) is in charge of security issues, while the Department for International Law, Human Rights and Treaty Law (UD FMR) deals with democracy-related priorities of the foreign and development cooperation policies.¹²⁶ In addition, the Ambassador for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law plays a key role in promoting the Swedish vision in this field, including the Drive for Democracy. Finally, the Swedish national Parliament’s (Riksdag)¹²⁷ function of control over the government’s action also extends to security and foreign policy matters.

¹²⁴ The Government of Sweden, [Statement of Government Policy](#), 18 October 2022

¹²⁵ Website of the Government Offices of Sweden, [Organisation of the Foreign Service](#), 14 November 2022

¹²⁶ The Government Offices of Sweden, [Organisation of the Foreign Service](#)

¹²⁷ Website of the Riksdag, [The 15 Parliamentary Committees](#)

- UNITED KINGDOM

Main policy documents	Year
Global Britain in a competitive age - The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (currently under revision)	2021
National Security Strategy (NSS)	2015
Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) White Paper	

“Global Britain in a competitive age - The Integrated Review (IR) of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy”¹²⁸ was presented in March 2021, replacing the former National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review White Paper “A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom”¹²⁹ of 2015. The document reflects a horizontal approach, bringing together all aspects of foreign policy and national security in one strategy and setting out a list of priorities defined as “Strategic Framework to 2025”. The IR’s commitment to universal human rights, the rule of law and free speech, as essential values of the national security and international policy, is marked, “especially in the face of rising authoritarianism”. When analysing the security environment, the IR focuses on the increased global competition, including between systems, manifesting as “the deliberate targeting of the vulnerabilities within democratic systems

¹²⁸ Website of the Government of the UK, [Policy paper. Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#), 2 July 2021

¹²⁹ Government of the UK, [National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015. A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom](#), November 2015

by authoritarian states and malign actors; and the testing of the boundary between war and peace, as states use a growing range of instruments to undermine and coerce others.” In this sense, the IR clearly identifies a cleavage “between democratic and authoritarian values and systems of government” as one of the main characteristics of the global security context. Russia is indicated as the most acute threat to the UK’s security - and China as a growing risk.

Furthermore, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), in its first annual report (released in 2021),¹³⁰ established the promotion of human rights and democracy as a strategic priority in the face of “the retreat of democracy and a rise in authoritarianism”.¹³¹ The FCDO maintains in its list of objectives the support to open societies and human rights¹³² without detailing specific strategic guidelines.

Following the further deterioration of the international security environment after Russia’s attack on Ukraine, the Parliament requested and obtained (13 October 2022) a revision of the IR, to assess changes in the strategic context and the IR’s capacity as a tool

¹³⁰ The Government of the UK, [Corporate report. Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office report](#), 8 July 2021

¹³¹ The UK Department for International Development, [Open aid, open societies: A vision for a transparent world](#), February 2018

¹³² The UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [Transparency data. Open Societies and Human Rights Programme Summary](#), 26 August 2022

to respond to major events and international crises.¹³³ The revision is expected by the end of 2022.¹³⁴

Institutional responsibilities

Following the adoption of the IR, the government undertook a reorganisation of the national foreign and security architecture: it replaced the former National Security Council (NSC) with a Foreign Policy and Security Council¹³⁵. The merging of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development into a new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the following adjustments¹³⁶ currently seem to evolve towards an additional staffing for the Ukraine response¹³⁷. The UK's external action in the field of democratic governance is under the

¹³³ At the time of writing, the next [Foreign Affairs Committee's \(House of Commons\) hearing](#) in the framework of the update to the UK's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, is planned for 14 November 2022

¹³⁴ [Letter by Sir Tim Barrow, National Security Adviser of the UK to Dame Margaret Beckett, Chair, Joint Committee on the National Security on Revised Committee Structure And Intergrated Review Refresh](#), 13 October 2022

¹³⁵ The UK Delegation to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, [Information Exchange On The Code Of Conduct On Politico-Military Aspects Of Security: UK Code Of Conduct Questionnaire Return 2021](#), 18 November 2021

¹³⁶ Patrick Wintour, The Guardian, [Foreign Office under Liz Truss has failed to regain global footing, report finds](#), 28 July 2022

¹³⁷ Sophia Gaston, British Foreign Policy Group, [The Foreign Secretary's Evidence on the Work of the FCDO](#), 29 June 2022

responsibility of the Director for Open Societies and Human Rights,¹³⁸ reporting to the Director General for Geopolitics and Security.¹³⁹ The responsibility for the security strategy is shared with the Director General for Defence and Intelligence.¹⁴⁰ At the level of the parliament, the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy scrutinises the government’s decision-making on national security.¹⁴¹ In addition, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons examines the expenditure, administration and policy in the field of external relations.¹⁴²

- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Main policy documents	Year
National security strategy	2022

The newly adopted national security strategy of the United States¹⁴³ strongly emphasizes the countering of authoritarian rule and the support to democratic governance, in a context of global contest between democracies and autocracies. It notes: “Actions to bolster democracy and defend human rights are critical to the United States not only because doing so is consistent with our values, but also because respect for democracy and support for human rights

¹³⁸ Website of the Government of the UK, [Biography Paul Williams](#)

¹³⁹ Website of the Government of the UK, [Biography Harriet Mathews](#)

¹⁴⁰ Website of the Government of the UK, [Biography Thomas Drew](#)

¹⁴¹ Website of the Parliament of the UK, [National Security Strategy \(Joint Committee\)](#)

¹⁴² Website of the Parliament of the UK, [Foreign Affairs Committee](#)

¹⁴³ The White House, [National Security Strategy](#), October 2022

promotes global peace, security, and prosperity. Global threats to accountable and transparent governance also threaten our own democratic system. We will continually update our range of tools to advance democracy and counter authoritarianism."¹⁴⁴ When detailing the nature of such challenges, the roles of the Russian and Chinese regimes are depicted differently, as the first is described as a threat, while the second mostly as a strategic competitor.¹⁴⁵

The Strategy notes its purpose to “advance democracy and counter authoritarianism”, responding “to the ever-evolving ways in which authoritarians seek to subvert the global order”.¹⁴⁶ As President Biden already laid out in his campaign platform, the new Strategy indicates that support for democracy abroad must be combined with the revitalisation of US democracy (see in this context the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal).

The strategy also notes that the US is open to work with any country, including rivals, to address shared challenges.

Institutional responsibilities

The President of the USA signs the USA’s National Security Strategy, which expresses his vision and outlines the goals that seek to enhance

¹⁴⁴ The White House, [National Security Strategy](#), October 2022

¹⁴⁵ See also US Department of Defense, [2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America](#), 27 October 2022

¹⁴⁶ The White House, [National Security Strategy](#), October 2022

the security of the country.¹⁴⁷ The National Security Council¹⁴⁸ (NSC) is the President's main framework for considering national security and foreign policy matters with senior advisors and cabinet officials. The Department of State is responsible for the management and implementation of security and foreign policy.¹⁴⁹ The NSC includes representatives from the Foreign Service, Civil Service, and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Within the Department of State, the office of reference is the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor,¹⁵⁰ which falls under the authority of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. The Department of State also includes the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs,¹⁵¹ its main link to the Department of Defence. This Bureau provides policy direction in the areas of international security, security assistance, military operations, defence strategy and plans, and defence trade. Finally, “the Constitution authorizes Congress to oversee but not establish U.S. foreign policy, except by law and approval of war and treaties. In that capacity, Congressional

¹⁴⁷ The United States Mission to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, [Information Exchange On The Code Of Conduct On Politico-Military Aspects Of Security. Questionnaire Return 2022](#), 12 August 2022

¹⁴⁸ Website of the White House, [National Security Council](#)

¹⁴⁹ Website of the State Department of the United States, [Organisational Chart](#), May 2022

¹⁵⁰ Website of the State Department of the United States, [About Us – Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor](#)

¹⁵¹ Website of the State Department of the United States, [About Us – Bureau of Political-Military Affairs](#)

committees question Department officials about matters of foreign policy, internal operations and other subjects as it sees fit".¹⁵²

About Democracy Reporting International

DRI is an independent organisation dedicated to promoting democracy worldwide. We believe that people are active participants in public life, not subjects of their governments.

Our work centres on analysis, reporting and capacity-building. For this, we are guided by the democratic and human rights obligations enshrined in international law.

Headquartered in Berlin, DRI has offices in Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Ukraine.

¹⁵² Website of the National Museum of American Diplomacy, [How does the Department of State interact with Congress?](#) 11 October 2022